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MR. LORING'S AUNTS

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

HELEN P. GLOYD

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A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By HELEN P. GLOYD
Author of "Mary Ann"

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MR. LORING'S AUNTS

CHARACTERS.

MRS. LORING.
LUCY MANNING.....*Her sister*
BIDDY, MARIE.....*Her maids*
ELEANOR.....*Her daughter*
MISS MARIA, MISS ANN.....*Mr. Loring's aunts*
MRS. JONES.....*Who keeps the Old Hill Sanitarium*
MISS LANE.....*An attendant*
MISS FLITE, MISS LITE.....*Inmates to be*
LIZZIE.....*An errand girl*
JANE.....*Another attendant*
INMATES, *ad lib.*

TIME.—The present. LOCALITY.—Plainfield.
TIME OF PLAYING.—1¼ hours.

SYNOPSIS.

MRS. LORING sends her sister to the station to meet MR. LORING'S AUNTS, whom she expects on the two-o'clock train, while MRS. JONES sends JANE to meet MISS FLITE and MISS LITE, whom she expects on the three-o'clock train. For reasons of her own LUCY arrives at the station at three o'clock, while JANE gets there at two. Each unknowingly takes the wrong party, which leads to a general mix-up, finally straightened out by ELEANOR and LIZZIE, with such excellent results that MRS. LORING is forgiven by the aunts, and peace is finally declared between the quarrelsome maids, BIDDY and MARIE.

COSTUMES.

MRS. LORING.—Afternoon gown.
LUCY MANNING.—Light summer dress, hat and wraps.
BIDDY.—Wrapper and large kitchen apron.
MARIE.—French maid's costume, cap and apron.
ELEANOR.—Light summer dress, hat and wraps.
MISS MARIA, MISS ANN } Elderly ladies, dressed rather quietly.
MRS. JONES.—Neat house dress.
MISS FLITE, MISS LITE } Elderly ladies, dressed rather gay.

INCIDENTAL PROPERTIES.

Work bags containing fancy work for MRS. LORING, MRS. JONES and the INMATES at the Sanitarium. Five-dollar bill for MISS ANN. Fur coat and muff for MISS LITE. Duster for MARIE.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

As seen by a performer on the stage facing the audience, R. means right hand; L., left hand; C., center of stage; D.R., door at right; D.L., door at left. UP means toward back of stage; DOWN, toward footlights.

MR. LORING'S AUNTS

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Sitting-room in* MRS. LORING'S *home. Afternoon. Door at* R. *leading to hall. Door at* L. *leading to kitchen. Window* UP L. *Table* DOWN R., *chairs* R. *and* L. *of table. Bell on table. Table with telephone* DOWN L. *Sofa* UP C. *Other furniture as desired; room represents an untidy appearance.*

MRS. LORING (*off stage* R.) Good-bye, John. Are you sure you have your rubbers? And your umbrella? Don't forget to match that silk, will you, dear? I really do need it. (*Pause*) On the two-o'clock train? (*Pause*) Why, of course, I'll do the best I can for them. (ENTERS D.R., *carrying work-bag*) Mercy, it's a greater task to get John started for the city than it would be for me to get ready to go to Europe. His rubbers—which are never to be found, and I don't believe he *wants* to find them—his umbrella, which he is sure to leave on the train—his valise, which always has to be unpacked and repacked a half-dozen times, are all so many things for me to be responsible for. (*Sits and takes out fancy-work*) Poor John, he was *so* worried for fear I'd do something to offend those aunts of his—and how he did warn me not to let anything happen to them—as if anything could! Well, I'll do the best I can for them. (*Looks around room*) But just look at this room! Was there ever such disorder as prevails in this house? If those two servants of mine could only be induced to

spend half the time in working that they do in quarrelling, they might get something done once in a while. (*Picks up thread from floor*) They haven't even swept! They know I'm afraid to say anything to them for fear they'll leave, so they follow their own sweet wills, and the Kilkenny cats would be a peace conference compared to them.

ENTER D.R.—LUCY *and* ELEANOR, *wearing summer wraps.*

MRS. L. Why, hello, girls. Where have you been all morning?

LUCY. Can't you guess, Edith?

MRS. L. I can't imagine. Tell me, Lucy.

LUCY. I knew you'd never guess in the world. Visiting your next-door neighbors.

MRS. L. My next-door neighbors! Really, Lucy, I didn't know we had any.

LUCY. Oh, yes, indeed we have. You know that big building up the hill, or are you so cumbered with household cares you haven't even seen it?

MRS. L. Up the hill? Oh, yes, I remember now. The Sanitarium?

LUCY. Yes, Old Hill Sanitarium they call it. It's all old ladies over there and all a trifle crazy. They are too funny for words, and we laughed all the time we were there. Really, Edith, you never saw anything so comical in all your life. Mrs. Jones, she's the matron, became quite huffy at us for laughing at them. She wouldn't know a joke if she bumped into one; stiffest old thing you ever saw. You may be sure she didn't ask us to come again, did she, Eleanor? (ELEANOR *laughs and shakes head*)

MRS. L. I hope you didn't hurt her feelings, Lucy. You really should be more careful.

LUCY. I'm afraid we did, but honestly, Edith, we just couldn't help it.

(*To* ELEANOR) Come on, chick-a-biddy; we'll take our things off.

Mrs. L. Wait a minute, Eleanor dear, let mother help you with your coat. Now, you take Aunt Lucy's wraps and hang them up, please. Mother wants to talk to Aunt Lucy. [EXIT Eleanor D.R.

Lucy (*sitting* L. *of table*). What's up now?

Mrs. L. Nothing much, except that we're going to have some company and——

Lucy. Nothing much! Edith, *company!* You can't mean it.

Mrs. L. Indeed! Is it such *a crime* to have company that——

Lucy. Edith, company! Heavens and earth, what will Biddy say? The very word company in this house is like a match in a gunpowder factory—and take it from me, I'd prefer the factory. Go on, I'm prepared for the worst.

Mrs. L. I don't know but you are right about Biddy. I haven't dared tell *her* yet.

Lucy. Now, Edith, take my advice. Biddy is a good cook and we don't want to lose her. It's bad enough for you and John to live way out here without having anything happen to rile Biddy—she's my own source of consolation in exile. Tell me, Edith, what do you want to have company for?

Mrs. L. I don't want to have company, but you see, Lucy, two old aunts of Mr. Loring's, very wealthy, Lucy——

Lucy. And liable to make wills. I think I'm beginning to see. Go on.

Mrs. L. Lucy! Well, John wants us to be nice to them, they being old.

Lucy. And *rich.*

Mrs. L. Lucy! Well, what I was trying to say was that you would be doing me quite a favor if you would drive down and meet them. They are coming on the two-o'clock train.

Lucy. How shall I know them when I see them? I don't intend to kidnap the first pair of old ladies I see.

MRS. L. John's brother, Dr. Loring, is coming with them as far as the station. We've written him that you'll be there, so he will be watching for you. Be *sure* you are on time. John says——

LUCY. But he doesn't know me, nor I him.

MRS. L. You are to wear a white carnation. It isn't likely that you will have any trouble identifying each other. Elderly ladies with young doctors escorting them don't come into the station very——

LUCY. Oh, I won't have any difficulty, of course, and I'll be glad to go. I'll get ready at once, so as to be in plenty of time to meet aunties. And may be they'll remember me in their wills, too.

MRS. L. Do. And be very careful, Lucy, not to offend them. John says their feelings are very easily hurt.

LUCY. You can rely on me. I'll be a perfect mother to them.

MRS. L. Now I'll have to break the news to the servants. (*Rings bell*)

LUCY. I don't envy you your job any. I should rather do it from the safe depths of a cyclone cellar.

[EXIT D.R.

ENTER MARIE D.L.

MARIE. You ring, Madame?

MRS. L. (*aside*). I must confess my courage is failing me. I wish John were here. (*Aloud*) Yes, I did ring —er—Marie.

MARIE. Oui, Madame.

MRS. L. M-m—— (*Aside*) How shall I begin? Oh, if John were only here. (*Aloud*) This room doesn't look very tidy——

MARIE. Vell, Madame, vat vould you? All ze day I try vork, vork, vork; all ze day I try make ze sings (*Waves hands*) vat you call nice. Oui, zat is ze vord, nice. I must remember zat vord, he will be useful—but Madame (*Shrugs shoulders*) zat-zat—vat shall I say in ze English and be remain politea, madame knows—all ze

day she say, zat Biddy zat she is ze boss—all ze day she say, she, now I do not zat vord remember—oh, oui, I have heem, she will change ze map of my face—I cannot bear it, me. Ze map of my face, he is mine and she shall not *change heem*. Madame, she——

MRS. L. That will do, Marie. What I wished to say is this, I am going to have company this afternoon and I'd like you to have the blue and the pink rooms put in order. Do you understand?

MARIE (*slowly*). Oui, madame, oh, oui, madame, I understand me. Always more vork for me. But, Madame, I pray zat zey may not be fed by zat Biddy zat try cook in ze kitchen. Ze food eet ees a horror! I am starve because I cannot eet heem, and ze company zey could not eet heem, too. And now ze company! She ees—what you call? Last straw? Oui, ze last straw. Madame, eet break my heart to tell you, but at ze end of ze month—I go.

MRS. L. Oh, no, you won't, Marie; but we'll talk that over later. Please get the rooms ready at once and send Biddy here.

MARIE. Oui, Madame.

MRS. L. Or wait a minute, I'll go with you myself and show you what I want done. I am very anxious that the rooms be in perfect order because the ladies are very particular. (ENTER LUCY D.R.) What, not gone yet?

LUCY. I'm going at once, Edith.

MRS. L. Very well, please hurry, Lucy, it is late.

[EXIT MARIE *and* MRS. LORING D.R.

LUCY. Mercy, I didn't know it was so late. But I did want to get that letter off to Bob. Poor boy, how lonesome he must be all alone in the city—I wish I were there or he here. How stupid of Aunt Jane to think that by sending me down here I would forget him. Forget him, indeed! I only think of him the more. (*Rings bell*) Well, I shall be twenty-one in a few months and then—— But this isn't driving down to the station to meet our welcome guests. *Welcome* is good! I won-

der how Edith came out in her interviews. Not very well, I imagine. I know those servants. Poor Edith. (ENTER BIDDY D.L.) Please tell Jim to harness the pony at once.

BIDDY (*aside*). At once, is ut? Shure you're airy wit yer orders, but I'm thinkin' yez'll wait till Jim gets good and ready. (*Aloud*) Yes, mum, at once ut is. (*Telephone bell rings*) [EXIT BIDDY D.L.

LUCY (*goes to telephone*). Hello—yes, this is Lorings—This is Lucy. What? Oh, Bob, is that really you? No, oh Bob, you aren't really going away. Not for long, I hope. Oh I'm glad of that. You change cars at Plainfield? Oh Bob, I can't. You only have a ten-minute wait over? I'd love to see you to say good-bye. What train are you coming on? The three-o'clock? Talk about tragedy! Bob, I have to leave that station at two o'clock. Yes—two aunts of John Loring's. I have it, Bob—I'll delay here—I'm late now anyway and I'll plan so as to reach the station at three o'clock. I'll say good-bye to you, then hunt up aunties, tell them I had a break-down. They'll have to believe me, but someone is coming—good-bye, then, till three o'clock. Yes, good-bye.

ENTER BIDDY D.L.

LUCY. Biddy, I'll give you one dollar if you will keep Jim from hitching up until half-past two without letting Mrs. Loring know anything about it.

BIDDY. I'm on, mum. [EXIT BIDDY, D.L.

ENTER MRS. LORING, D.R.

MRS. L. Why, Lucy, haven't you gone yet? Dear me, I do wish you'd hurry up. John said if there was one thing his aunts had no patience with it was unpunctuality.

LUCY. Well, I can't help it, can I? Jim is still hitch-

ing. I just sent Biddy out to hurry him up. I've been all ready for ten minutes.

MRS. L. Oh, these servants! They get worse and worse. I do wish John would come home. Here it is two o'clock now. John's aunts must be at the station and you haven't even *started* yet. Oh, dear——

LUCY. Well, I'll go and see if I can hurry Jim any. (*Aside*) A-hem! [EXIT LUCY D.L.

MRS. L. (*rings*). Oh, dear, I'm so sorry this has happened. I wish John were here. What an——

ENTER BIDDY D.L.

BIDDY. Yis'm.

MRS. L. I didn't find this room in very good order.

BIDDY. If yez please, mum, I hope I know me place, mum, an' that is in the kitchen, mum, an' not in here a-clainin' and a-tidyin' up of the rooms afther some, an' names I'd scorn to be afther mintionin', mum, but it's yersilf an' none bether who knows who I'm manin', which same has their own wurrk to do, an' faith it ain't mesilf'll be afther doin' it for thim afther standin' on these two feet all day bakin' an' boilin', an' her too nice an' Frenchified to do ought but turn up their noses at vittuals what is bether than nor what they're used to be havin', as I ought to know, that have wurrked in the best places, none better, mum, as me references——

MRS. L. Biddy, that will do! Now if you will keep quiet long enough I will tell you something.

BIDDY. Fire away, mum.

MRS. L. Biddy, you are not respectful.

BIDDY. Respectful! Faith an' respectful is ut, to me that has borne what I have borne the day. Yez don't be afther wantin' me to say a wurrd in me own defense, is ut—well, I shall that same, not being a weak martyr, mum, tho' patient it is I am, to be sure; but, ma'am, I could talk and to good purpose about things yez don't be afther knowin' about that's goin' on in this house the day——

MRS. L. Biddy, that will do. I just wanted to tell you that I'm expecting company and——

BIDDY. Company, is ut? Company, is ut? An' me with all the wurrk to do an' no help but what I'm afther be havin', an' that's wurse nor naught. Faith, mum, an' I'll give yez me notice here an' now, much as I hate to be doin' ut—for it's a kind mistress yez are an' a generous one, but human flesh an' blood is human flesh and blood, an' can only stand so much, which same isn't what's bein' put on me the day. So if yez plaze, mum——

MRS. L. (*wearily*). Biddy, will you *please* be quiet and listen to *me* for a moment? I wanted to say that if you will stay with me until my company, just two old aunts of Mr. Loring's, have gone, and not quarrel with Marie, I will raise your pay two dollars a month. Does that please you, Biddy?

BIDDY. I'll stay, mum, just to plaze ye, mum, an' be obligin'.

MRS. L. But remember, Biddy, no quarrelling.

BIDDY. As to that, mum, plase to remember as it isn't me as does the fightin' an——

MRS. L. Biddy, that will do. Now tidy up here a bit, please, and hurry, for I wouldn't have Mr. Loring's aunts see this house looking so for the world, and remember dinner at six. [EXIT D.R.

BIDDY. Tidy up, is ut? Tidy up, indade! Shure an' I ain't a-goin' to be tidyin' up afther no (ENTER D.R. MARIE *carrying duster.* BIDDY *pretends not to see her*) if these here Frinch that's so stylish they can't do their own wurrk knew what others thot o' thim, they might come down a peg or two. (*Goes to table*) Faith, an' will yez look at the durt of ut. Saints presarve us, it's six inches dape. (*Writing name on table*) Shure, yes kin write yur name in ut. Look at that now, B-i-d-d-y, Biddy, plain as print on paper it is, an' more shame to the housekapin' the day.

MARIE (*furiously*). Mon Dieu, eet is more zan I can bear. To be eensult, eensult, eensult by—by—sooch——

BIDDY. Careful, Frinchy yez go to callin' me names an' there'll be pieces of Frinch all over this place.

MARIE. Poof! I scorn you. You know noddings, noddings, rien noddings. I no longer vill endure you, I geeve notice. No longer vill I serve ze food, he is terrible, awful.

BIDDY. An' will yez look at phat's talkin'. Shure, an' it's a penance I've been doin' fer me sins to be livin' wit yez at all—at all, and faith, the vittuals is bether nor yez ever had.

MARIE. Be silent et, Mon Dieu, zat I should see ze day. (*Begins to dust*)

BIDDY (*trying to take the duster away*). Beggin' your pardon, Frinchy, the missus towld me ter dust.

MARIE (*clinging to duster*). Ze dusting she ees my office. Thou shalt not——

BIDDY. Fly away wit yer offices. The missus towld me to dust. (*They run around table, each clinging to duster, and tip over furniture, etc.*)

ENTER LUCY D.L.

LUCY. Girls! (MARIE *and* BIDDY *separate*) In heaven's name, what do you call this?

BIDDY. The missus towld me to dust an' dust I shall, or give me notice.

MARIE. Ze dusting eet ees my office, and so shall I do eet or geeve my notice.

LUCY. This is beyond me. (*Calls*) Edith!

ENTER MRS. LORING D.R.

MRS. L. What's the matter?

LUCY. Can you make peace here? It seems they both insist upon dusting this room. It needs it certainly; and both are going to leave if they can't do it.

MRS. L. Biddy, as I asked you to dust, please do so.

BIDDY. Very well, mum. (*Aside to* MARIE) Wan on you, Frinchy.

MRS. L. Marie, please go and see if Jim is ready.

MARIE. Oui, Madame. [EXIT D.R.

MRS. L. Lucy, it is half-past two. Oh, John will be furious when he learns we kept his aunts waiting.

LUCY (*aside*). It's Bob I'm interested in, not John. (*Aloud*) Well, I can't help it, can I?

MRS. L. I suppose not, but it seems to me——

ENTER MARIE D.R.

MARIE. Jim he ees ready. [EXIT D.R.

LUCY. Very well, off at last. I'll hurry so as not to keep them waiting too long. Good-bye, Edith.

[EXIT D.R.

MRS. L. I wouldn't have had it happen for the world. It almost seemed to me as if Lucy dawdled on purpose. Biddy, go see about dinner, please. I'll dust here. Remember, dinner at six. Let's have *something* on time to-day.

BIDDY. Yis, mum. [EXIT D.L.

MRS. L. (*dusting wearily*). Oh, I wish John would come home. This family is too much for me.

ENTER ELEANOR D.R.

ELEANOR. Mother!

MRS. L. Yes, dear?

ELEANOR. Marie wants to know about the silver.

MRS. L. Well, I'll come and show her myself.

[EXIT D.R.

ENTER BIDDY D.L.

BIDDY. One dollar I git from Miss Lucy fer making Jim wait. Twas no job, fer he'd rather wait than wurrk any day. An' a two-dollar raise from the missus. It's mesilf couldn't be fer laving when it's such a soft job I'm havin'. All but that Frinchy, an' it's the joy of me life to cook fer her. Shure I'll make an Irish stew fer her supper an' see Miss Frinchy rave. Begorra, 'twill be the fun. Oh! this is the grand day's wurrk, Biddy, me lass. But why did Miss Lucy want Jim to wait? It looks quare ter me, very quare. (*Shakes head*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Sitting-room of the Old Hill Sanitarium. Very plain furniture. Several chairs placed about the room. Window* UP C. *Couch under window; there is a white sheet under the couch-cover. Doors at* L. *and* R. DISCOVERED MRS. JONES *and three or four* INMATES *seated about room, embroidering, etc.*

MRS. JONES Ladies, we are going to have two new visitors at our sanitarium; won't that be nice?

FIRST INMATE (*sniffs*). Nice, huh!

SECOND INMATE (*tossing head*). Indeed!

THIRD INMATE (*snipping thread of embroidery*). Crowded already!

FOURTH INMATE (*rising and smiling graciously*). Madam, I wish to say that in the face of the discourtesy of my ladies in waiting, which I am very sorry to see and which I will surely rebuke, I, as Queen of England, will be glad to offer her all the hospitality of which my domain is capable. (*Bows again and sits*)

FIRST INMATE (*sniffs*). Queen of England, huh!

SECOND INMATE. Queen of England, indeed!

THIRD INMATE. Crazy! Just plain crazy.

FOURTH INMATE. Will you have the kindness to state who it is you are calling crazy?

MRS. J. Ladies! *Please, please.* (*Rings bell*) I know—I am sure—you will all be just as kind and pleasant as you can and not make any unnecessary trouble for any of us. (ENTER LIZZIE D.L.) Lizzie, has Jane gone?

LIZZIE. Yas'm.

MRS. J. What, so early?

LIZZIE. Been gone an hour.

MRS. J. Why, it's only half-past two.

LIZZIE. Yas'm, but she wanted to meet the two-o'clock train.

Mrs. J. Why?

Lizzie. I dunno why. She don't tell me nothing about why she wants to do things. But she was bound and determined to meet that two-o'clock train, and we had to fly around some, now let me tell you. I know what I think, though.

Mrs. J. What?

Lizzie. I dassn't tell. But Jane she got a letter this morning an' it was in her beau's writing.

Mrs. J. That will do, Lizzie. You should know by this time I don't care to listen to such gossip. It is immaterial anyway. Now please find Miss Lane and send her here.

Lizzie. Yas'm. [EXIT D.L.

Mrs. J. Dear me, two more boarders! I'm sure I don't know what's to be done with them. It seems to me that I have about enough on my hands now. When first I opened Old Hill it was with the idea of taking a few of the dear old ladies, but I have been besieged with applications since my opening last Fall. I hate to refuse any of them, but these two that are coming to-day must positively be the last.

ENTER Miss Lane D.L.

Miss Lane. Lizzie said you wanted me. Is anything the matter? Where is Jane? I want her.

Mrs. J. Jane has gone to the station to meet two newcomers.

Miss Lane. Two more? Why, there isn't a vacant room in the house. Where on earth will you put them?

Mrs. J. For the present they must occupy this room. It has a couch and is quite warm and comfortable. The doctor is coming with them as far as the station. I had Jane wear a white carnation so he would be sure and recognize her. One can't be *too careful*, you know. He says in his letter that they are sweet old ladies, but given to believing they are someone else, so don't pay any attention to what they may tell you.

MISS LANE. Oh, I shouldn't anyway!

MRS. J. Take these ladies up to my sitting-room. We will have to use that as a general sitting-room for the present.

MISS LANE. But will these new ladies be all right there? These windows are not barred, you know.

MRS. J. Oh, they'll be all right. The doctor said they are not really crazy, only slightly. (*Taps forehead*) Now, ladies, Miss Lane will show you to your nice new sitting-room.

FIRST INMATE. (*sniffs*). Nice new room, huh?

SECOND INMATE. Nice, indeed!

THIRD INMATE. Northwest room, I'll be bound.

FOURTH INMATE (*bowing*). My comrades are discourteous, but never did General Washington flinch at hardships. Shoulder arms! (LADIES *stand erect*) Forward, march! (*They all march out stiffly at* D.L. *followed by* MISS LANE)

MRS. J. Mrs. Blinks may have hallucinations, but she certainly is a great comfort. I hope the new ones are like her.

ENTER JANE D.R., *followed by* MISS ANN *and* MISS MARIA

MRS. J. What, back so soon? You didn't take long for your errand, Jane. (*Aside*) So these are my new visitors. (*To* MISS ANN *and* MISS MARIA) Good afternoon, ladies. Won't you be seated?

JANE. A word with you, Ma'am. (JANE *and* MRS. JONES *withdraw to corner,* ANN *and* MARIA *sit*)

ANN. 'Pon my word, Sister Maria, Niece Edith is cordial.

MARIA. Nothing if not so, Sister Ann.

ANN. I must say, Sister Maria, that this is hardly the welcome I expected or hoped for.

MARIA. You are right, as always, Sister Ann. (*They sit up very straight*)

JANE (*to* MRS. J.) Yes, ma'am, they came on the two-o'clock train instead of the three-o'clock, so it's lucky I went early. The doctor didn't get off the train except to help them off. He pointed to me and they came straight over. But, ma'am, I don't see how he dared trust them, for they're as crazy as a pair of lunatics. They called me Mary and said what a pretty girl I am—just what their sister-in-law's nephew, or nephew's sister-in-law, ought to be. They think they're some grand relations, I guess, by their questions about John and Edith and Biddy. They most drove me distracted trying to answer them. I'm glad to get them home.

MRS. J. Are you sure they're the right ones?

JANE. *Sure.* Two old ladies and a doctor-looking man. And he looked right at the white carnation and then pointed to me. An' they were the only ones.

MRS. J. It must be all right, Jane. The doctor said they were given to hallucinations. But it is strange they should come on the two-o'clock train when the letter said distinctly the three-o'clock train. Well, they are here, anyway. You may go.

JANE. Yes, ma'am. [EXIT D.L.

MRS. J. (*to* AUNTS). Pardon my seeming rudeness, but my maid wished to speak to me. Won't you lay off your wraps? I hope you had a pleasant journey. Put your things on the couch and Jane will take care of them.

ANN (*stiffly*). Thank you, Edith, I will.

MARIA (*more stiffly*). Thank you, Edith, so will I.

MRS. J. (*aside*). So I am Edith, am I? Well, I might as well humor them. (*Aloud*) Do make yourselves comfortable. And now, Miss Flite—which is Miss Flite?

ANN. Pardon me, madam, but my name is Ann.

MARIA. Pardon me, madam, but my name is Maria.

MRS. J. (*aside*). Mercy, they are much worse than I expected they would be. It is going to be hard work to take care of them. (*Aloud*) I beg your pardon, ladies, I must have mistaken your names. I will try

to remember them in the future. (*Aside*) Yes, I will humor them. It's the best way.

ANN (*aside to* MARIA). Is Edith crazy? I certainly thought Mary was *queer*, but this woman! Really, Maria, I don't know what to think!

MARIA (*to* ANN). Let me talk to her. (*Aloud*) And now, Edith, since we have had a long journey and are weary, will you show us to our rooms?

MRS. J. I am very sorry, ladies, but all my rooms are occupied and this will have to be your apartment for the present.

ANN *and* MARIA (*together*). *This!*

ANN. Did not Nephew John tell you we were coming? I thought we let him know in plenty of time for you to get ready for us. We are each used to having a separate room with a southern exposure.

MRS. J. But really, ladies, you *must* be reasonable. My other rooms are all occupied and this, as you see, has a southern exposure. (*Aside*) Crazy! Crazy! Crazy! I don't know what I shall do with them. (*Shaking head*)

MARIA (*to* ANN). She talks like a lodging-house keeper. (*Aloud*) Is Nephew John having a house-party? Most inconsiderate of him, I call it, when—— (ENTER MISS LANE D.L.) Mercy, here comes a person in a nurse's uniform. Pray, Edith, who is sick? Why didn't you let us know? (MARIA *and* ANN *talk aside*)

MRS. J. (*aside to* MISS LANE). You talk to them, will you? They are getting beyond me.

MISS LANE. But why do you always humor their delusions?

MRS. J. Well, that has always been one of my methods, and perhaps they do not know they are in a sanitarium, poor things. Do not tell them. We can spare them that much, at least. [EXIT D.L.

MISS LANE. Now, ladies——

MARIA. This repetition of "Now, ladies," is getting unbearable. Young woman, who are you? And what are you doing in this house? If anyone here is ill I de-

mand to be told. It is my right to be told. Where is my nephew, John? I wish to speak to him at once.

ANN. Sister Maria, keep calm. But, young woman, my sister's anger is righteous. We came here prepared to be friendly with our nephew, to take him and his wife into our lonely old hearts, to remember them in our will. We are received with coldness. We are treated like strangers. We are even denied proper apartments. Woman, explain. (*Wipes eyes.*)

MISS LANE (*soothingly*). There, there, nobody meant to hurt your feelings. We are busy here and overcrowded and cannot give each—— (*Aside*) Heavens! what am I saying? Mrs. Jones will be furious if I tell them where they are. (*Aloud*) Everything will be made right, I assure you. And I must beg of you not to excite yourselves. It will be bad for you. It will make you worse.

MARIA. Sister Anne, the cool impudence of this person is getting beyond endurance. We will leave at once.

ANN. At once, Sister Maria. (*They pick up their things, put on wraps and start for* D.R.)

MISS LANE (*barring way*). Now look here. There's no use of your being so silly. You might as well be quiet and make the best of it. You can't leave and it's no use for you to try. (*Bell rings*) Mrs. Jones wants me, so I will leave you, but after your conduct I shall be obliged to lock you in. [EXIT D.R.

MARIA. Ann!

ANN. Maria!

MARIA (*tries door*). Locked!

ANN (*tries door*). So it is, Sister Maria. (*Goes to couch and sinks down, weeping*) Sister Maria, they are all crazy. What shall we do?

MARIA (*sitting down beside her*). Yes, Sister Ann, they are all crazy. Oh, to think that we should be so treated.

ANN. Oh, Sister Maria, it is horrible. (*They put their arms around each other and cry*)

ENTER LIZZIE D.L.

LIZZIE. Gee! Look at 'em. (*Taps forehead*) Nobody home, all right. Say, ladies——

MARIA (*jumping up*). If another person dares to address us as "ladies" during our sojourn here, there will be violence done.

LIZZIE (*aside*). These are the woist we've had in some time. (*Aloud*) Well, but ain't you?

MARIA. What?

LIZZIE. Ladies?

MARIA. I trust we are. Sister Ann, are we not?

ANN. I have always been led to believe we were, Sister Maria.

LIZZIE. Then why don't you want to be called ladies, wot?

ANN (*aside*). This girl seems rational, at least rational as compared with the others. They are none of them really rational in this house. Now, Sister Maria, let us question her and perhaps we can learn the reason for the coolness of our reception.

MARIA. That, Sister Ann, is a most sensible idea. I will speak at once. (*Aloud, abruptly*) Girl!

LIZZIE (*startled*). Yas'm.

MARIA. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.

LIZZIE. Aw, that's all right. I don't care. But you see, Mrs. Jones always——

ANN. Who?

LIZZIE. Why, Mrs. Jones.

ANN. And who, pray tell, is Mrs. Jones?

LIZZIE. The lady wot met you when you come in here.

MARIA. Sister Ann, we must solve this mystery.

ANN. Yes, Sister Maria, we must.

MARIA (*taking out purse*). Girl, do you want to earn five dollars?

LIZZIE. Do I? Do I? You just try me and see.

MARIA. You shall have this five-dollar bill if you will tell us where we are and why.

LIZZIE (*aside*). I'm beginning to think there's something wrong here. They don't give five-dollar bills to the crazy ones to carry around. (*Aloud*) Well, I should think by this time you'd know you were at Old Hill.

ANN *and* MARIA (*together*). Where?

ANN. Girl, explain.

LIZZIE. Why, Old Hill Sanitarium, what Mrs. Jones keeps for old ladies what is. (*Taps forehead*) Didn't you know? Maybe I hadn't ought to a told you, but I did anyway. Now where's my five dollars? (MARIA *gives her bill*) Thanks. Say, I don't believe youse are crazy, and if youse want anything youse kin just call on me. See? Now I gotta go. (*To* ANN) But say, where'd you think you were, lady?

ANN. Why, at my nephew's, John Loring's, house. Is there such a person in the neighborhood?

LIZZIE (*sinks on couch, laughing*). Gee, this is rich. They've got the wrong ones. Say, Mr. Loring lives down the hill about half a mile. (*Aside*) But I won't tell them too much. I might get into trouble. (*Aloud*) But Jane was told to bring youse here. Well, I gotta go. (*Laughing*) [EXIT, D.L.

MARIA. Sister Ann!

ANN. Sister Maria!

MARIA. A sanitarium. Sister Ann, this is a plot to get our money. We must frustrate it. We must escape.

ANN. Sister Maria, we must.

MARIA. To think that a nephew of ours would go to such lengths just to get our money.

ANN. Isn't it terrible? But he shan't.

MARIA. No, Sister Ann, he shall not.

ANN. Not one penny, Sister Maria.

MARIA. No, Sister Ann, not one penny.

ANN (*tries the door*). We cannot escape by this means. The girl has locked us in.

MARIA (*tries the door*). Do you suppose we could break the lock, Sister Ann? (*Going back to couch, examining cover, etc.*)

ANN. They would hear us, Sister Maria.

MARIA (*solemnly*). There is a sheet on this couch under the cover.

ANN. Yes, Sister Maria.

MARIA (*examining window*). Sister Ann, this window is not barred.

ANN. No, Sister Maria.

MARIA. Sister Ann, do you remember that moving picture performance in Plainfield Niece Lothrop insisted upon our attending?

ANN. I do, Sister Maria, and bitterly regret the wilful waste of time and money.

MARIA. I did too, but now, Sister Ann, do you remember how the prisoner tore his sheet into strips and knotting them together made a ladder by which he escaped through the window?

ANN. (*aghast*). Sister Maria, would you dare?

MARIA. Sister Ann, in my present state of mind I dare anything. Let us get to work. (*They tear the sheet into strips and knot them together*)

ANN. Oh, Sister Maria.

MARIA. Well, Sister Ann?

ANN. Do you dare trust yourself to do that?

MARIA. Sister Ann, when one is desperate, but hark! someone is coming. We must hide this or it will be taken from us. (*They smooth couch-cover.* MARIA *puts rope* C. *and sits on it*)

ENTER MRS. JONES D.L.

MRS. J. And now, ladies——

ANN. Ladies again!

MRS. J. What did you say?

ANN. Nothing, Mrs. Jones.

MRS. J. (*aside*). Praise Heaven! They have come to their senses, at last. I only hope they will remain rational until I get them settled. (*Aloud*) And, now, ladies——

MARIA. Mrs. Jones, will you have the kindness to address us in some other manner than that parrot-like repetition of, "Now, ladies"? If we must endure the horrible wrong that is being done us by one whom we have always loved and trusted, pray do not make it worse by any such constant and irritating repetition as your, "Now, ladies." Call us Miss Flite or Night or Fright or whatever else may suit your fancy or fall in with your villainous schemes, anything but "Now, ladies."

MRS. J. (*in despair*). They are off on a new tangent. They are violently insane! I will not keep them. I will not. They are beyond me. (*Aloud, soothingly*) And now, la—I beg your pardon, Miss Flite and Miss Lite. Will you kindly follow me? I should like to have you meet the rest of our guests.

MARIA (*aside*). And let her discover our only means of escape, never! (*Aloud*) Pardon me, Madam, but I much prefer to remain here. Ann, you may go if you wish.

ANN. Sister Maria, I will never desert you. (ANN *and* MARIA *sit upon couch, motionless, with folded hands and stare straight ahead*)

MRS. J. (*aside*). Oh, whatever shall I do with them? Firm as Gibraltar! I shall have to try coaxing them. I must get them upstairs some way. Being alone will only make them worse. (*Aloud*) Now, ladies——

MARIA (*jumping up in anger*). Madam, our names are *not* "Now, ladies." (ANN *moves quickly and sits on rope*)

MRS. J. I'm sure I beg your pardon, but I must insist upon your following me. The routine of this establishment cannot be interrupted in this way for every whim of our guests. (*Aside*) Sweet old ladies, indeed! I'd like to have that doctor here for about ten minutes.

ANN. Sister Maria, sit down. Now, Madam, we are sitting on this couch, do you comprehend?

MRS. J. I certainly do.

MARIA. And upon this couch we shall remain until we wish to move. An attempt upon your part to move us will end badly for you. Now leave us, I beg of you, as we are very tired. The events of this afternoon have been very wearing, and I promise you that this is the last *trouble* we will give you.

MRS. J. (*aside*). I'll give in to them just once more. Maybe they'll keep that promise if I leave them alone. (*Aloud*) Very well, la—— I beg your pardon, you are not ladies. I will leave you for a little while, relying on your promise not to give me any more trouble.

MARIA. I assure you, Madam, we will trouble you very little after this, if you will leave us.

ANN. Have the goodness to go at once, Madam; but before you go, I must warn you that your part in this horrible comspiracy will *not* be overlooked when this affair is brought to book.

MRS. J. (*aside*). Heaven defend us. Now it's conspiracies. I will call Miss Lane at once! And to think he called them dear old ladies. Dear old ladies, indeed! [EXIT D.L.

MARIA. And now that the coast is clear we can plan our escape from this terrible place.

ANN. Yes, Sister Maria, we will escape and punish Nephew John to the full extent of the law. (*Both go towards window and prepare to climb out*)

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Same as* ACT I. *The room is in excellent order; fresh flowers in vases, etc.*

ENTER BIDDY, D.L.

BIDDY. So Frinchy had to go to work and clane up, eh? Shure, an' I may not be so stylish as her, nor have the airy way of wavin' me hands, (*Imitates* MARIE'S *gestures*) but me kitchen is clane an' me cookin' good. (*Picks up vase and wipes it with corner of apron to see if it is dusty*)

ENTER MARIE, D.R.

MARIE (*starts to sing, then breaks off*). How can I sing ven I am hongrie, oui, hongrie. Ze food I cannot eet heem. Hee's not feet, he ees terrible—and I must vork so veree hard, for my vork I must do heem and ze vork of zat Biddee also. My, I shall grow seek and die, and zat Biddee shall be my murderer.

BIDDY. Well, an' is that so? An' phwat's afther bein' the matther with the vittials, may I ask?

MARIE. Oh, she ees here, zat Biddee. What does she here ven ze place for she is in ze kitchen. Poof, I cannot breathe ze same air as she. I will went. [EXIT D.R.

BIDDY. Shure, Frinchy, ye're the smart wan wit yer tongue, but the supper yez'll be afther gettin' the night will make ye rue the day yez were borrne. No, Frinchy me swate wan, yez aren't wise, or yez'd niver sass the cook, no, yez'd niver sass the cook.

ENTER MRS. LORING, D.R.

MRS. L. Biddy, have you seen any signs of Lucy?

BIDDY. No, mum.

MRS. L. Hasn't she got back?

BIDDY. Faith, mum, d'yez think I've been secratin' of thim somewhere?

MRS. L. No, Biddy, of course not, but I am getting so worried. I wouldn't know what to do if anything happened to Mr. Loring's aunts. I should never dare face Mr. Loring. Oh, Biddy, do you go look down the road and see if they are coming.

BIDDY. Yis, mum. [EXIT D.L.

MRS. L. I do hope they like their rooms. Old ladies are so hard to please, and John said his aunts were very particular. I hope I can get along well with them. John says they are strong-minded. (*Nervously straightens furniture*) This is such an outlandish household. I'm afraid they will think we're heathens. I shall have to keep Biddy and Marie apart all I can. But I do wish John were here.

ENTER LUCY D.R., *followed by* MISS FLITE *and* MISS LITE.

LUCY. Here we are, Edith. Aunties, let me introduce your new niece. Niece, allow me to present Mr. Loring's aunts. There, now, I think you are acquainted.

MRS. L. Oh, you don't know how glad I am to see you. Aunt Ann—which of you is Aunt Ann? (*Aside to* LUCY) Why didn't you tell me which was which?

LUCY. Don't know myself. I've been trying to find out all the way home. You can try your luck at it.

MRS. L. (*aloud*). Did Lucy keep you waiting along? I was afraid she would, she started from here so late.

MISS FLITE. No, indeed, Mrs. Jones——

MRS. L. What? (*Aside to* LUCY) What does she mean?

LUCY. Don't ask me what they mean by anything—I can't make them out. Maybe it's because they're so strong-minded.

MRS. L. (*to* MISS LITE). Won't you be seated? You must be tired after your journey. (MISS FLITE *and* MISS LITE *sit on couch.* MISS LITE *makes signs on her fingers*)

LUCY. She's deaf and dumb, Edith.

MISS FLITE. No, she ain't.

LUCY *and* MRS. L. What?

MISS FLITE. I say she ain't deaf and dumb.

MRS. L. Why doesn't she say something, then? Why does she pretend to be deaf and dumb? What does this all mean? (*Aside*) Oh, I wish John were here!

LUCY. I thought she was deaf and dumb.

MISS FLITE. So does she.

LUCY. So does she what?

MISS FLITE. Think she's deaf and dumb.

MRS. L. (*to Lucy*). Heaven defend us! Are they crazy, or am I?

LUCY. I'm beginning to think I am, if they are not. She insists upon calling me Jane, says she knows my cousin. She wanted to know if the matron was kind—oh, (*Aside*) I can't begin to tell you the crazy things she said to me coming up from the station.

MRS. L. (*aside*). Well, I wish I could find out which is which. If John were here he could talk to them. I wish he'd come home. (*Aloud*) Won't you let me show you to your rooms? Perhaps the journey was a little too wearing. It is a long trip, with the drive up from the station and all. After a good night's rest things will look clearer to you, I hope. Come.

[EXIT MRS. LORING, MISS FLITE *and* MISS LITE D.R.

LUCY (*sits down and fans herself*). Whew! the trip up from the station was too much for me. Strong-minded, John called his aunts, did he? Well, if they are strong-minded, praise Heaven I'm weak-minded. I can't understand it all. They are so *very* queer. Oh, well, they aren't my aunts. I saw Bob off anyway. I think Providence is watching over us that aunties should come on the three-o'clock train instead of the two-o'clock. John would have been wild if I had kept them waiting a whole hour. As it was, everything went off beauti-

fully and nobody need ever know. But wouldn't Aunt Jane be furious if she knew I'd seen Bob? I'll go up and write a letter to the dear boy so he'll receive it as soon as he reaches Boston. It may keep him from being too lonesome. Oh, but wouldn't Aunt Jane be *wild* if she knew! [EXIT D.R.

ENTER MARIE *and* BIDDY, D.L.

MARIE. Biddee, you shall not cook ze Irish stew for my supper. I detest heem. I abominate heem. I despise heem. I will not eat heem. He ees terrible, awful! He ees——

BIDDY. Well, yez are welcome to go without supper if that's the way yez feel about it, fer I've only cooked just enough of anything ilse fer the missus and I ain't goin' to rob the missus jest to plase you, Frinchy. Fer me part there's nawthin' in the whole wide world that so warms me heart and makes me whowl bein' feel happy like a good hot Irish stew wit the praties and the onions an' the little bits of beef a-floatin' in the broth of ut. An' if it ain't good enough fer the loikes av yez, yez kin go hongry. Shure an' maybe fastin' 'll cure the disposition of yez. Put that in yez poipe an' shmoke it. See!

ENTER MISS FLITE *and* MISS LITE D.R.

MARIE. Ah, look, Biddee. Here come ze aunts. Zey must be veree riche to be so much account made of. I wish I was riche, meaa, I should not then be hongree an' eat ze Irish stew. (MARIE *and* BIDDY *step* L. *almost to wings*)

MISS FLITE. Now, Susan, what on earth possessed you to go and have one of your tantrums just when we're coming into a strange place? You don't know much, you poor thing, but you really ought to know better than that. Whatever am I going to do with you?

MISS LITE. You, Grace, you? Pray what have you

got to talk about? What will the lady say when she sees you've gone and taken all the window curtains in your room down and hid them under the bed?

MISS FLITE. I didn't.

MISS LITE. You did.

MISS FLITE. I say I didn't.

MISS LITE. I say you did.

MISS FLITE. Well, I want to see the sun in the morning. You know I must see the sun or I shall fade like a fragile floweret. (*Pretends to fall backward*)

MISS LITE. You, a fragile floweret! I should think you would fade to think how foolish you can act.

BIDDY. Begorra, that Susy one is the mane crather. She's got a tongue loike pepper.

MARIE. Non, she has ze cause. She but defends herself. Eet was ze other who began eet—ze quarrel.

BIDDY. I say the Susy wan is mane.

MARIE. I say she ees not. Eet ees ze other.

MISS LITE. Oh, two other guests. I did not see you. Good afternoon, ladies.

MARIE. So glad to greet you. Shall I call ze Madam?

MISS FLITE. Yes, please do. (MARIE *looks at her, shrugs her shoulders and turns to* MISS LITE)

MARIE. Anything I can do for ze madame, I shall do so gladly.

BIDDY. Well, talk about that impudence. (*To* MISS FLITE) Don't yez be afther noticing the crather. She knows nothing anyway. I'll stand up fer yez, an' yez are lucky, fer I'm the cook. Shure it's wise yez are to stand in wit the cook, an' lucky as them that doesn't as found out to their sorrer, the day an' in this very house —wit the Irish stew a cookin'——

MARIE. Vairee clevair, ees thees Biddy, but (*Shrugs shoulders*) remembair, I on ze table wait and eet ees well to be on ze, what she call it, good side? Oui, good side, I must that word remembair, of ze waitress, n'est—ce pas?

Miss Lite. Well, Grace, I am fortunate to find someone at last who will stand up for me against your odious persecutions, even if it is only a menial.

Biddy (*aside*). Manial, is ut? Begorra, it's her that's the mane one to be calling names. Shure an' afther this it's lucky she'll be to be gettin' anything to ate at arl, at arl.

Miss Flite. Odious persecutions indeed! I'll show you what odious persecutions can be. (*Makes a dive at her, but is restrained by* Biddy)

Biddy. Whist, now don't you be afther getting yourself in hot water. The ither wan isn't wurth ut.

Marie. Mamselle, hear that. Will you stand eet—will you be quiet and hear such names called by that Biddy? I will defend you, so—— (*Starts for* Biddy *and tips over vase*)

Biddy. Whist, now look at what ye've done. It's me for the kitchen.

[EXIT d.l. Marie *takes dust-cloth and wipes up carpet.*

Miss Flite. That was your fault.

Miss Lite. It was not. It was yours.

Miss Flite. I say it was yours.

Mrs. L. (*outside*). Marie, send the Misses Loring here, please.

Marie. Ladies, you had better—what is eet zat zat Biddee say?—beat eet! Oui, beat eet. Oh, I remembair ze word this time.

ENTER Mrs. Loring d.l.

Miss Lite. I might have known you'd do something like that, Grace.

[EXIT d.r., Miss Flite *and* Miss Lite, *quarrelling.*

Mrs. L. (*looking after them*). She doesn't sound very deaf and dumb. I'm sure I don't know what to make of them. I wish John were here. Marie, what are you doing?

Marie (*aside*). Cannot ze madame see? I em crank-

ing ze automobile. Ah, Madame, the cat she knock over ze vase. I clean him up, moi. Zit is one vairee bad cat. I think her name Biddee.

MRS. L. (*laughing*). What a pair you are. You simply cannot help quarrelling, can you? Where is Eleanor? I wish to see her.

MARIE. I shall go bring her. [EXIT D.R.

ENTER LUCY D.R.

LUCY. Oh, Edith—oh, dear me!

MRS. L. For mercy's sake, Lucy, what awful thing has happened now?

LUCY. Are Mr. Loring's aunts crazy?

MRS. L. Not that I know of. Why?

LUCY. Well, that other one, the deaf and dumb one, insists that it is winter, and here it is the middle of July. I want to take them out driving and she has on a fur coat and she will wear it in spite of all I can do or say.

ENTER ELEANOR D.L.

MRS. L. Well, let her wear it if she wants to. We mustn't offend them, you know. John said they were quite sensitive.

ENTER MISS FLITE *and* MISS LITE D.R. MISS LITE *has coat and carries muff.*

MRS. L. (*aside*). They must be crazy. Well, I shan't say anything to them. I wish John were here. (*Aloud*) Eleanor, these are your aunties.

ELEANOR (*aside*). What's she got a fur coat on for, Mamma?

MRS. L. Sh! Don't say anything, dear. You might hurt her feelings, just pretend you don't see it.

ELEANOR (*aside*). I think she's funny anyway. (*Aloud*) How do you do, Aunt Ann and Aunt Maria?

MISS FLITE. Is this your little girl, Mrs. Jones?

ELEANOR (*aside*). Why, how funny! Mrs. Jones is

the lady over at Old Hill. I wonder why she calls Mamma that.

MRS. L. Yes, indeed, this is my daughter, Eleanor, but my name is Edith.

MISS FLITE (*aside*). They aren't very formal here, are they? I wonder if she isn't an inmate, too. She acts queer to me.

MRS. L. Is Lucy going to take you driving? I'm sure you will enjoy a drive this beautiful day.

MISS FLITE (*to* MRS. L.). Shh! She thinks it's winter. She'll be having a tantrum in a minute if you bother her.

LUCY. Oh, good night! I can't stand this much longer. Come, Aunties. Jim must be waiting. I hope you'll manage to keep warm, anyway—winter or summer. [EXIT D.R. MISS FLITE *and* MISS LITE

MRS. L. Well, I must say——

ELEANOR. Mamma!

MRS. L. Yes, dear?

ELEANOR. Why did they call you Mrs. Jones?

MRS. L. I'm sure I don't know.

ELEANOR. But, Mamma——

MRS. L. Never mind, Eleanor. Don't puzzle your brain about it. Your father will be home in a day or two and he will straighten things out. Don't you want to look at this pretty new book for a little while? I wish to lie down for a few minutes and I would like to have you here when they return.

ELEANOR. I suppose so, but Mamma——

MRS. L. You can tell me all about it by and by. Now read your book and don't disturb me on any account, because I am very tired. [EXIT D.R.

ELEANOR. Well, I can't help it if she won't let me tell her, but those aren't my aunties. I've seen my aunties once and I know they weren't like these old ladies. Well, I don't see what I can do about it, but when Papa sees them and it all comes out that they're someone else —they'll blame me for not telling that I knew Aunt

you get very many more up here I'm going back to Springfield, Aunt Jane or no Aunt Jane.

ENTER D.R., ELEANOR, MISS ANN *and* MISS MARIA.

ELEANOR. Mamma, let me introduce to you Aunt Ann Loring and Aunt Maria Loring.

MRS. L. *and* LUCY. What?

MRS. L. Child, what does this mean?

ANN. It means, Mrs. Loring, that we have escaped from the institution where you and my nephew so wickedly had us placed, and, meeting your daughter up the road, accepted her invitation to ride. We come here for the purpose of telling you that not one cent of our money shall ever be yours. Woman, your plot has failed. I bid you good-day.

LUCY. Please wait a minute. I entreat you, do not go. Eleanor, what does this all mean?

ELEANOR. Well, Aunt Lucy, you got the wrong ladies at the station. You arrived there too late, and Aunt Ann and Maria were taken off to the sanitarium by their girl, who was at the station to meet these ladies. (*Points to* MISS FLITE *and* MISS LITE) You brought these ladies here thinking they were Papa's aunts. I tried to tell Mamma they were no relations, but she wouldn't listen. Lizzie at the Sanitarium said she was going to let Aunt Ann and Aunt Maria out, and I went and met them. That's all.

MRS. L. Lucy, what have you done? This is dreadful! (*To* MISS ANN *and* MISS MARIA) Will you ever forgive us? I don't know what to say or how to—we—oh, how can I explain? What will John say? (*Cries*)

MARIA. I think I'm beginning to see things clearly. We all took things too much for granted. But you (*to* LUCY) could not have been on time to meet us. *You* were unpunctual.

LUCY. I know it was all my fault. You see, it was like this: I am engaged, and my Aunt Jane does not

approve, so she sent me down here. Well, Bob, my fiancee, was going to change cars at Plainfield at three o'clock. He's going away and I simply had to see him to say good-bye. I put off starting for the station as long as I could and when I got there you were gone and these ladies got off the train. They answered the description I had of you. I thought it was all right and brought them along. Won't you forgive Edith, please? It was my fault, not hers. She's been lying awake nights to think of ways to please you. And John—think what John would say if he came home and found you'd gone away angry and learned the reason why.

ANN. Sister Maria, shall we go or shall we stay?

MARIA. Let us stay, Sister Ann, for you must admit it has all been very exciting and there's little enough excitement in our lives nowadays. But at the sanitarium they will be worrying.

MRS. L. (*rings bell*). Then you forgive us? I am so glad! Lucy, you must take the cart at once and drive Miss——

MISS FLITE. Flite.

MRS. L. Miss Flite and Miss——

MISS LITE. Lite.

MR. L. Miss Flite and Miss Lite over to Old Hill and explain to Mrs. Jones how the mistake occurred.

ENTER MARIE D.L.

LUCY. I'd rather be hung, but I suppose I must do it. Come, ladies.

[EXIT D.R., LUCY, MISS FLITE *and* MISS LITE

MRS. L. (*to Marie*). Show these ladies to their apartments, Marie. Or no, Eleanor and I will go with you, Aunt Ann and Aunt Maria. Marie, you may tell Biddy to serve tea at once.

[EXIT D.R., MRS. L., ELEANOR, ANN *and* MARIA.

MARIE (*at* D.L.). Biddee! Biddee!

ENTER BIDDY D.L.

BIDDY. What now, Frinchy?

MARIE. Eef you could listen at ze door as I came in, you should know vat ze mattair ees. Miss Lucy, she bring ze crazy ladies here. Zey are not ze aunts, no. Ze aunts zey go to ze crazy ladies' house on ze hill. Oh, Biddee, how she ees funny, thees joke. (*Laughs*)

BIDDY. Thim other wans wuz crazy, say you? Thim wans we thought wuz the aunts?

MARIE. Oui, zey were ze—what you call heem—nutty dames—oui!

BIDDY. Mary, by the saints, we've been foightin' and actin' jest loike thim crazy wans. Shure, Mary, it's loonies we are too. Yez kin foight afther this day if yez will, but it'll be with yersilf. I'll not fight with yez longer. They wuz crazy, say you? No crazier nor us.

MARIE. An' not ze Irish stew for eat any more, Biddee!

BIDDY. Not onless yez axes me fer ut. Yez kin eat yer salads in peace fer all of me. Crazy, begorra, crazy! An' us a fighting just like em. Oh, it's ashamed of mesilf I am! So here's me hand on ut.

MARIE. I, too, will geeve my hand. Vee must not be lak them, no. Biddee, we vill be friends, yes? I will be on ze, what you call, ze good side of ze cook, and at last I shall be feed.

CURTAIN.

FEMALE CHARACTERS

PEREGRINATIONS OF POLLY

Comedietta in One Act. Three Females

By Helen P. Kane

One plain interior scene. Polly and Margaret, bachelor maids, being invited to attend a musicale, determine to exchange escorts. The result may not have been such as was intended, but certainly was one to have been expected. The dialogue throughout is brilliant and snappy, the action quick, thus ensuring a success for this bright sketch. Plays forty-five minutes.

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE RAINBOW KIMONA

Comedy in Two Acts. Nine Females

By Eleanor Maud Crane

One interior scene. The Rainbow Kimona is a club composed of seven of the Senior Class, each member wearing a kimona representing one of the colors of the rainbow. In a small apartment an entertainment is arranged in which each girl assumes a leading character in one of Shakespeare's plays, burlesqued in outrageously comical style. The whole thing is a medley of the most amusing kind. Plays one and a half hours.

PRICE 25 CENTS

OUTWITTED

Society Sketch in One Act. Three Females

One interior scene. Two of the girls twit each other about the attentions of a handsome young army officer at a ball the night previous, each covertly aiming to outwit the other. It transpires later that the officer has had a little tiff with another girl to whom he was engaged, and his attentions were merely side-play. For cutting but polite sarcasm this sketch is rarely equalled. Plays twenty minutes.

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE FUTURE LADY HOLLAND

Comedy in Three Acts. Four Females

By Helen P. Kane

One interior scene. The dowager Lady Holland has arranged that her niece, Diana, should marry Lester, the present Lord Holland, son of the dowager. To that end she directs another niece, Yvonne, to devote herself to Stacy Brent, thus throwing Diana and Lester together. How successful her scheme proves is told in the climax. Plays one and a half hours.

PRICE 25 CENTS

TOM'S ARRIVAL

Play in One Act. Three Females

One interior scene. Three maiden ladies, learning by wire that Tom is to arrive, make different arrangements for his comfort. The surprising arrival of Tom creates consternation in the little household and the audience is kept out of the secret until the last moment. Plays twenty-five minutes.

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE CONSPIRATORS

Comedy in Two Acts. Twelve Females

By Evelyn Simms

One interior scene. A clever little comedy showing how the Senior Class girls got the best of Miss Primleigh. Sparkling throughout. Plays about forty minutes.

PRICE 15 CENTS

FEMALE CHARACTERS

RECEPTION DAY AT THE SETTLEMENT HOUSE

An entertainment in 1 act, by Agnes C. Ruggeri. Can be played by 12 or 16 female characters. 1 interior scene, simple or elaborate, as desired. Time, if played straight, 1 hour, or can be lengthened if specialties are introduced. The managers of the "New Thought Settlement House" invite their friends, nominally to inspect the building, but incidentally to induce some financial support. Among the visitors are German and Irish characters, suffragists, etc., some in favor of and others opposed to the movement, all widely contrasted and all good. This play has been presented several times for some of New York's largest churches and always with great success.

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A comedy in 2 acts, by Agnes C. Ruggeri. 10 female characters. 1 interior scene. Time, about 1 hour. Modern costumes. Dorothy, an idealist on the subject of boarding houses, advertises as about to open a cozy, comfortable home for members of her down-trodden sex. The applicants, including a suffragist, a demonstrator, an actress and a singer, are of such different classes that great scope is given for character impersonations. Jennie, the waitress, and Mammy Sue, the colored cook, have strong comedy parts.

PRICE 15 CENTS

ROSEMARY

A play in 4 acts, by Arolyn Caverly Cutting. 14 female characters. 1 interior scene, plain or elaborate, as may be desired. Time, 1½ hours. Particularly adapted for girls' high schools. The action of the play occurs in Boston. The cast, including as it does two Southern girls, a prim Boston matron, an old darkey mammy, an Irish maid, the "twinnies" and the other Boston residents, gives great scope for character acting.

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A play in 1 act, by Katharine Kavanaugh. 3 female characters. 1 easy interior scene. Time, about 30 minutes. Modern costumes. An excellent opportunity for a clever dialect comedienne, as an old darkey mammy has a very effective rôle and is quite important in developing the unexpected climax.

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A romantic drama in 2 acts and an after scene, by Helen P. Kane. 4 female characters. Plain interior scene. Time, about 45 minutes. Easily produced. An absorbing story of a child who has been stolen by the Indians and her restoration after many years.

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A play in 1 act, by Bernard Herbert. 4 female characters. Parlor scene. Modern costumes. Time, 30 minutes. A bright little society play, with numerous keen witticisms at the expense of ultra-fashionable people.

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LITTLE SAVAGE. 3 Acts; 2 hours; 1 Stage Setting	4	4
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